



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

Pakistani arms dealer sentenced to more than 12 years for illegally exporting military parts to the Middle East

SAN DIEGO – A 56-year-old Pakistani weapons trader who masterminded a high-profile illegal arms export scheme with two United States citizen partners was sentenced yesterday to 150 months in prison and three years probation for violating the Arms Export Control Act.

Arif Ali Durrani was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Larry A. Burns on charges stemming from an extensive investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) that began in 2004.

In March 2006, a federal jury in San Diego found Durrani guilty of multiple violations of the Arms Export Control Act, including four counts of exporting defense articles without a license and one count of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States.

“By vigilantly pursuing illegal arms dealers, particularly those with a history of selling U.S. military hardware to state sponsors of terrorism, ICE is helping to keep sensitive technology from falling into the wrong hands,” said Mike Unzueta, special agent in charge for the ICE office of investigations in San Diego. “Durrani is clearly an enemy of the United States and the sentencing judge saw that too.”

The evidence presented during Durrani’s trial established that the Pakistani national conspired with two Southern California arms dealers to illegally export millions of dollars in military aircraft parts from the United States to the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Belgium, including some parts that were destined for Iran.

Durrani most recently resided in Rosarito Beach, Mexico, a beach community near the San Diego/Baja California border. His two co-conspirators, retired Navy officer George Budenz, 60, and Richard Tobey, 38, resided in Southern California. Both men pleaded guilty in federal court to violating the Arms Control Export Act and are awaiting sentencing.

The illegal exports included temperature control amplifiers for the General Electric J85 turbine engine used on the F-5 fighter and other military aircraft; an afterburner hydraulic actuator for the J85 engine; and 1st Stage Turbine Nozzles for the Honeywell T55 engine used on the Chinook military helicopter.

Durrani was previously convicted in 1987 of violating the Arms Export Control Act by illegally exporting HAWK missile system components from the United States. After serving his criminal sentence he was deported from the United States in the late 1990s. Ultimately, he took up residence in Rosarito Beach and began orchestrating his illegal export business from Mexico.

On June 12, 2005, Mexican law enforcement officials arrested Durrani for being in Mexico illegally. Days later, Durrani was being deported by Mexican authorities to his native Pakistan when ICE agents met his connecting flight in Los Angeles. Upon his arrival, ICE agents arrested Durrani pursuant to a sealed indictment and arrest warrant issued in the Central District of California in May 1999. The indictment resulted from an investigation by ICE agents in Oxnard that began in 1993.

The 1999 indictment, which was unsealed at Durrani's initial court appearance in June, charged him with two counts of violating the Arms Export Control Act. Specifically, the indictment alleged that Durrani's now defunct company, Lonestar Aerospace in Ventura, California, illegally exported more than 100 compressor blades for the General Electric J-85 military jet engine to foreign customers in 1994. Those charges were dismissed last month paving the way for Durrani's prosecution in the Southern District of California on the charges for which the jury found him guilty this year.

Durrani will face deportation again after his prison sentence is completed.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.